

Utah's Perpetual Baby Boom

Utah's birthrate was the highest in the nation in 2005

According to the most recent American Community Survey (ACS), Utah's birthrate was the highest in the nation in 2005. Utah has held this position for quite some time, thanks in part to such things as a generally healthy economy, youthful population, and the predominant culture. ACS reports that in 2005 there were approximately 87 births per 1000 women age 15 to 50, which gives Utah a clear lead over number two-ranking Arizona, with a birthrate of 70. Nebraska ranked third with a birth rate of 69, and the average for the nation was 57 (see chart).

The estimated number of Utah births was approximately 56,600, which constitutes roughly 1.3 percent of the total number of births in the United States in 2005. This percentage is striking when compared to the fact that ACS estimates the Utah population in 2005 to hold only 0.8 percent of the nation's population.

Another notable statistic from the survey attempts to measure how many children were born into poverty in 2005. In Utah, about one in every six births was to women whose yearly income was below the poverty level. This is certainly a disturbing rate, but is considerably lower than the national rate of one in four births.

Utah Households
An obvious result of a high overall birthrate is a large average household size. Utah also ranks first in the nation for average household size at 3.07 persons, which is 0.15 higher than number two-ranked California and 0.42 higher than the national average.

The average family size in the nation is an estimated 3.18 persons, while Utah's families average 3.56 persons. According to ACS, a household includes all the people who occupy a housing unit as their usual place of residence and a family is a group

of two or more people who reside together and who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption.

Age and Marital Status
Of the women in Utah who had a child in 2005, about 15 percent of them were unmarried. This is the lowest rate of any state in the nation and well below the national average of 30.6 percent. The largest share of births was to mothers between 20 and 34 years of age (85 percent) while the smallest share was from the 35 to 50 age category (11 percent). Given Utah's status as the youngest state in the

nation with a median age of 28.5 years, it is not surprising to see the majority of births concentrated in the younger age category.

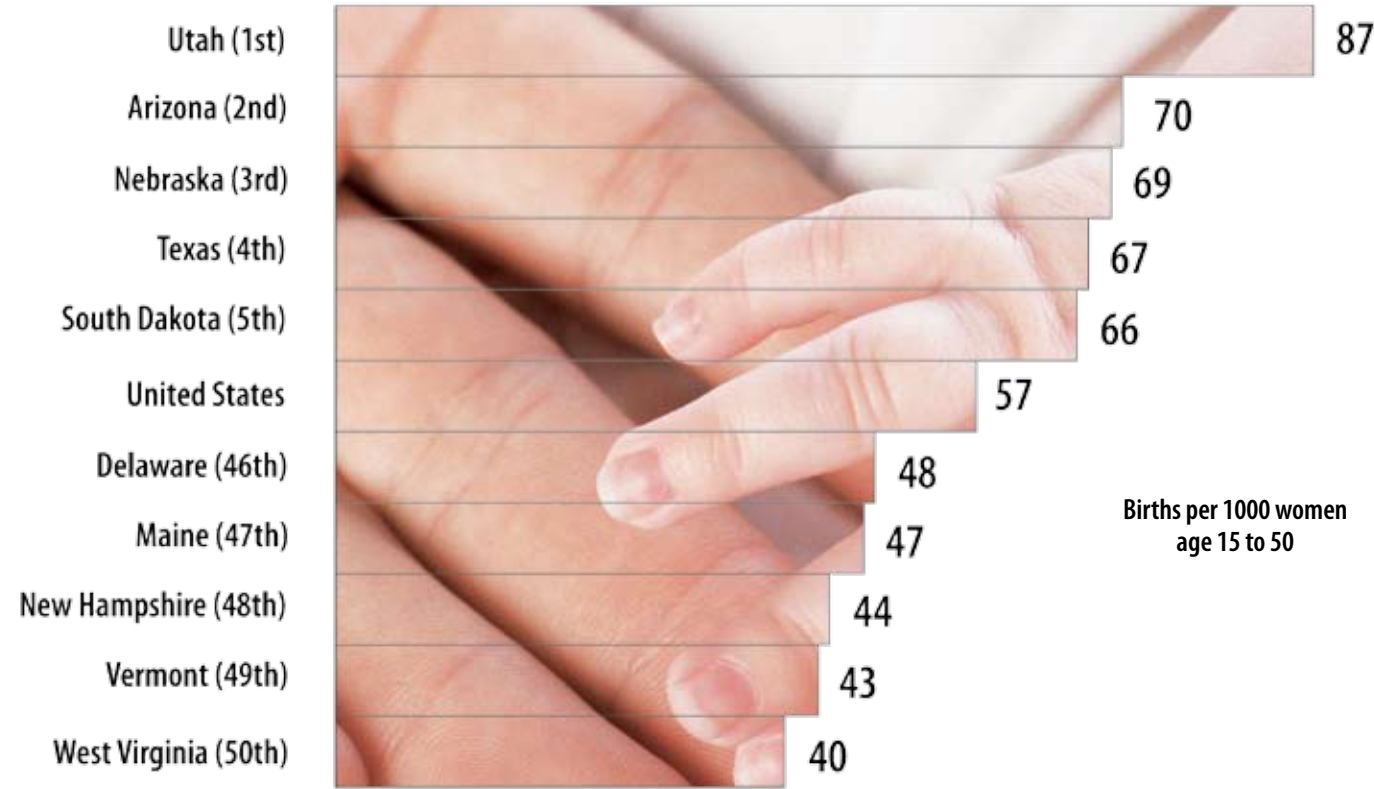
Utah's Hispanic Population
Utah's Hispanic population is also outpacing the nation in birthrate. The national birthrate for Hispanics is estimated at 80 births per 1000 Hispanic women age 15 to 50, which is considerably less than Utah's rate of 109. An estimated 14 percent of Utah births in 2005 were to Hispanic mothers. And like the population of Utah in general, the Hispanic

population is relatively young, with an estimated median age of 25.1 years.

Economic Implications
What does a high birthrate mean for the Utah economy? An increasing population usually brings about an increase in consumption.

Therefore, more births can be an economic stimulus, as long as the economy has the productive capacity to meet the increase in demand. With the availability of resources and a relatively skilled workforce, this has generally been the case for Utah.

Birthrates for Select States and Nation • By Rank



Source: American Community Survey, U. S. Census Bureau